

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 FDRE-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

SS-15 PM-04 SP-02 L-03 INR-07 INRE-00 CIAE-00 EB-07

DHA-02 IO-11 IGA-02 OC-05 MED-03 SCA-01 SCSE-00

PASS-00 OES-05 DPW-01 /138 W
----- 104456

O 151910Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 274

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 1235

DEPT PASS ROUTINE SAN SALVADOR MANAGUA SAN JOSE TEGUCIGALPA
MEXICO USUN USMISSION GENEVA SECDEF NIACT IMMEDIATE JCS NIACT
IMMEDIATE USCINCSO NIACT IMMEDIATE USDA/FAS ROUTINE

AIDAC FOR AID/PHA/FDRC

E.O. 11652 NA

TAGS: SWEL, GT

SUBJ: GUATEMALAN EARTHQUAKE - SITREP #15

1. DELLENBACK VISIT. JOHN DELLENBACK, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS OF ACTION (HEAD OF PEACE CORPS
WORLDWIDE) ARRIVED 1635 FEB 13 FOR TWO-DAY VISIT. SPENT EVENING
FEB 13 VISITING WITH PCV'S WHO WERE BETWEEN ASSIGNMENTS.

2. ON FEB 14, DELLENBACK AND GUATEMALA PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR
FLEW BY HELICOPTER TO THREE TOWNS IN CHIMALTENANGO DEPARTMENT:
SAN MARTIN JILOTEPEQUE, SANTA APOLONIA, AND CHIMALTENANGO.
AT SAN MARTIN JILOTEPEQUE THEY VISITED VOLUNTEERS WHO
WERE CONDUCTING "DAMAGE AND NEED" SURVEYS AND ASSISTING
IN THE EFFORT TO BRING OUT THE INJURED. AT SANTA
APOLONIA THEY VISITED PCV'S WHO WERE ORGANIZING RECON-
STRUCTION COMMITTEES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. AT THEIR
FINAL STOP, CHIMALTENANGO, THEY VISITED PCV'S WORKING
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AT THE BEHRHORST CLINIC, AT THE CARE DISTRIBUTION

CENTER, AND AT THE ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL.

3. GUATEMALA PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE PEOPLE IN SMALLER TOWNS OF SAN MARTIN JILOTEPEQUE AND SANTA APOLONIA HAVE BOUNCED BACK FROM THE DISASTER MORE QUICKLY THAN THOSE OF CHIMALTENANGO. THE SMALLER TOWNS ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO ORGANIZE FOR THE FUTURE, WHILE THE PEOPLE IN THE LARGER TOWN OF CHIMALTENANGO STILL SEEM TO BE REELING UNDER THE SHOCK OF THE EARTH-QUAKE.

4. DELLENBACK PLANS RETURN TO WASHINGTON MORNING FEB 16.

5. ELECTRICITY SITUATION. PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ELEC-TRIFICATION INSTITUTE (INDE), ING. RICARDO BARRIOS PENA, TOLD EMBOFF FEB 11 THAT ALL OF INDE'S PLANTS ARE INTACT, EXCEPT FOR 5 MW GENERATING PLANT AT PALIN, ESCUINTLA. POWER IS AGAIN BEING DISTRIBUTED NORMALLY IN GUATEMALA CITY. SOME OF INDE'S SERVICES OUTSIDE GUATEMALA CITY HAVE BEEN INTERRUPTED, HOWEVER. THE 69 KVA LINE TO EL RANCHO, EL PROGRESO, WHICH SERVED THE DEPARTMENTS OF ALTA VERAPAZ AND BAJA VERAPAZ, IS DOWN AND NOT EXPECTED TO BE REPAIRED FOR ANOTHER TWO MONTHS. IN THE INTERIM, POWER IS BEING DISTRIBUTED TO ALTA AND BAJA VERAPAZ VIA AN ALTERNATIVE LINE. BARRIOS ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT INDE WOULD IN THE FUTURE ATTEMPT TO MOUNT EQUIPMENT AT THEIR SUBSTATIONS IN A MORE FLEXIBLE WAY SO THAT LINES WOULD HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF "GIVE" IN EARTHQUAKES. (THE CHIMALTENANGO ELECTRIC COMPANY, WHICH IS OUT OF OPERATION, IS PRIVATELY OWNED.)

6. INDE IS PLANNING TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CHIXOY AND AGUACAPA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS. WORK ON THE AGUACAPA PROJECT, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY GENERATE 90 MW, IS TO BE INAUGURATED FEB 24.

7. FIELD HOSPITAL ACTIVITIES. THE AMERICAN FIELD HOSPITAL AT LOS APOSENTOS, CHIMALTENANGO, ADMITTED 5 PATIENTS AND DISCHARGED 21, LEAVING A CURRENT PATIENT CENSUS OF ONLY 15. THIS IS LOWEST NUMBER OF INPATIENTS

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SINCE THE HOSPITAL OPENED A WEEK AGO. NINE PERSONS WERE TREATED ON A MEDICAL OUTPATIENT BASIS, BUT NO ONE RECEIVED DENTAL OUTPATIENT TREATMENT. THERE WERE NO BIRTHS OR DEATHS.

8. PHASING OUT OF ARMY FIELD HOSPITAL AND REFERRAL OF PATIENTS TO CHIMALTENANGO PUBLIC HOSPITAL IS TO BEGIN FEB 16 AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE SCHEDULED TO DEPART FEB 17.

GIFT OF TENTS, COTS, BLANKETS, AND SOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES IS BEING CONSIDERED. EXPENSIVE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND WATER PURIFICATION UNIT WILL BE RETURNED TO US. DEPENDING ON COST CONSIDERATIONS HOSPITAL VEHICLES MAY BE LEFT IN COUNTRY PERMANENTLY OR TEMPORARILY.

9. NOT ONE BUT SEVERAL EPICENTERS. DR. GEORGE PLAFKER, US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, BRIEFED THE AMBASSADOR 1830 FEB 14 ON FINDINGS SO FAR OF USGS TEAM (SEE GUATEMALA 1114 FOR EARLIER REPORT). THEIR CURRENT ESTIMATES OF INTENSITY AND EPICENTER OF GUATEMALAN QUAKES AS FOLLOWS: 0304 FEB 4, CENTERED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN IZABAL AND ZACAPA DEPARTMENTS FIVE MILES SOUTH OF LAKE IZABAL, 7.5 RICHTER; 1220 FEBRUARY 6, AT EL PLATANAR, EIGHT MILES EAST OF GUATEMALA CITY, BETWEEN 5.75 AND 6.0 RICHTER; 0214 FEBRUARY 8, ON THE COAST ABOUT 14 MILES NORTHEAST OF PUERTO BARRIOS, 5.5 RICHTER; 0545 FEB 9, THREE MILES NORTHEAST OF LA ESPERANZA, COPAN DEPARTMENT, HONDURS, 5.5 RICHTER. PLAFKER SAID AS A ROUGH GUESS THAT AFTERSHOCKS, SLOWLY AND IRREGULARLY DIMINISHING IN INTENSITY, WOULD CONTINUE FOR THREE MONTHS. HE SAID ALL ESTIMATES OF EPICENTERS HAVE MARGIN OF ERROR OF UP TO 20 KILOMETERS, SO THAT FEB 4 COULD EASILY (AND MOST LOGICALLY) HAVE BEEN RIGHT ON THE MOTAGUA RIVER FAULT, JUST EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF WHERE THE INSTRUMENTS NOW PLACE IT.
MELOY

NOTE BY OC/T: GUATEMALA 1235 PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARA-10 FDRE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

SS-15 PM-04 SP-02 L-03 INR-07 INRE-00 CIAE-00 EB-07

DHA-02 IO-11 OC-05 MED-03 SCA-01 SCSE-00 PASS-00

OES-05 DPW-01 IGA-02 /138 W

----- 104527

O 151910Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 276

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMALA 1235

AIDAC FOR AID/PHA/FDRC

10. DR. PLAFKER SAID HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES RECALL NO KNOWN CASE WHERE A QUAKE CAUSED BY A STRIKESLIP FAULT SUCH AS THE MOTAGUA HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER MAJOR QUAKE. WHEN STRAIN HAS BEEN RELIEVED ON SO LARGE A SECTION OF THE EARTH'S CRUST, ALONG A 145-MILE FAULT IN THIS CASE, IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO STAY RELIEVED FOR AT LEAST 50 YEARS. THE 1917-18 QUAKES IN GUATEMALA CITY WERE NOT STRIKESLIP QUAKES BUT RATHER SHIFTING ALONG A SECONDARY NORTH-SOUTH FAULT WHICH HAS BEEN DETECTED ALONG A 16-KILOMETER ROUTE RUNNING THROUGH MIXCO. THE FEBRUARY 4 QUAKE MAY ALSO HAVE RELIEVED STRAIN ON THE MEXICOFALT THAT HAS BUILT UP SONCE 1917-18; SO, AT LEAST, WE MAY HOPE.

11. PLAFKER SAID ONE OF SERIOUS EFFECTS OF THE QUAKE HAS BEEN THE FORMATION OF NATURAL DAMS BY LANDSLIDES, WHICH HAVE BACKED UP RIVERS AND COULD CAUSE SERIOUS FLOODING. THE LARGEST OF THESE IS 60 METERS HIGH, ON A RIVER JUST SOUTHWEST OF SAN MARTIN JILOTEPEQUE. HE RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REMOVE OR TUNNEL THROUGH THIS AND OTHER RIVER BLOCKAGES.

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12. PREFAB HOUSING. THE PROSPECT FOR USING LOCALLY-PRODUCED PREFAB HOUSING IN THE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT DOES NOT APPEAR VERY PROMISING. LOCAL SAWMILL OWNER TOLD US THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME 60 SAWMILLS IN THE CITY, NONE OF THEM IS PRODUCING PREFAB HOUSING. ANY EFFORT TO GEAR UP FOR PRODUCTION OF LOW-COST PREFABS WOULD RUN UP AGAINST PROBLEM THAT THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL PRODUCTION OF PLYWOOD ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. UNLESS LARGE AMOUNTS OF PLYWOOD WERE IMPORTED FROM THE US, BUILDERS HERE WOULD HAVE TO RELY COMPLETELY ON WOOD SIDINGS, WHICH WOULD RAISE THE COST CONSIDERABLY. ONE SOURCE INDICATED TO US THAT EVEN IF GOG MADE PREFABS A TOP PRIORITY, THE LOCAL INDUSTRY COULD AT BEST PRODUCE 100 TO 150 UNITS PER WEEK.

13. HELICOPTER OPERATIONS. UH1H "HUEY" HELICOPTERS FLEW 134 FORTIES, CARRYING 6190 LBS OF RELIEF SUPPLIES, 317 PASSENGERS AND EVACUEES, AND 58 MEDEVACS. HIGH WINDS AND DUST HAMPERED FLYING.

CH-47 "CHINOOKS" FLEW 91 SORTIES, CARRYING 192,000 LBS. OF FOOD, CLOTHING, ROOFING MATERIAL, AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF WATER SYSTEMS (3000 GALLON TANKS, PVC PIPING AND FITTINGS), AND 243 PASSENGERS INCLUDING PLUMBERS TO HOOK UP WATER SYSTEMS AND MILITARY CADETS TO OPERATE STORAGE TANKS AND TEST WATER FOR POTABILITY. 4 WATER TRAILERS WERE AIRLIFTED PENDING ARRIVAL OF TANKS. CHINOOK ALSO RECOVERED UH1H THAT CRASHED FEB 13.

FOUR OF THE EIGHT CH-47'S IN COUNTRY ARE SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO US FEB 17 AS EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM WINDS DOWN.

14. WATER. 18 WATER TANKS WERE AIRLIFTED FEB 14 TO RURAL AREAS AND 16 MORE ARE SCHEDULED TO BE INSTALLED FEB 15. THE GUATEMALA CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED 23 TANKS FOR DISTRIBUTION IN THE SECTIONS OF THE CITY WITHOUT WATER, 12 OF WHICH HAVE REPORTEDLY ALREADY BEEN SET UP. GUATEMALAN MILITARY ACADEMY CADETS ARE RECEIVING TRAINING IN SETTING UP AND RUNNING TANKS. DESPITE PUBLIC CLAIMS BY THE WATER AUTHORITY UNCLASSIFIED

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ON FEB 14 THAT THE ATLANTICO STATION WOULD BE OPERATING WITHIN 24 HOURS NO WORK HAS BEEN DONE ON THE STATION.

15. UNITED STATES RELIEF FLIGHTS. MILITARY: AS OF 1100 FEB 15 NO MILITARY FLIGHTS HAD BEEN REPORTED.

16. NONMILITARY. C-130 ARRIVED 2200 FEB 13 WITH 49,585 LBS OF CARGO, INCLUDING ONE VEHICLE AND OTHER RELIEF SUPPLIES. L-188 ARRIVED 0100 FEB 14 WITH 22,816 LBS OF UNKNOWN CARGO CONSIGNED TO THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY OF GUATEMALA. CV-240 ARRIVED 1135 FEB 14 WITH 45,000 LBS OF BLANKETS, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND PLASTIC. G-2 (SMALL JET) ARRIVED 1205 FEB 14 WITH 2000 LBS OF MEDICAL FOOD SUPPLIES. ANOTHER G-2 ARRIVED 1220 FEB 14 WITH 2,150 LBS OF TENTS FOR ALMACENES PAIZ. BRANIFF 727 ARRIVED 1355 FEB 14 WITH 38,847 LBS OF BREAD FOR THE EVANGELICAL COMMITTEE. C-46 ARRIVED 1355 FEB 14 WITH 12,000 LBS OF TENTS, BLANKETS, AND MEDICINE. DC-6 ARRIVED 1430 FEB 14 WITH 15,500 LBS OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES. CITATION ARRIVED 1700 FEB 14 WITH 250 LBS OF FOOD AND MEDICINE. AT 1745 FEB 14 BOEING 707 ARRIVED WITH 67,000 LBS OF FOOD AND MEDICINE. AT 2015 LOCKHEED ELECTRA ARRIVED WITH 600 LBS OF PLASTIC TARP, 200 LBS OF NYLON ROPE, 5000 LBS OF BLANKETS, AND 26,000 LBS OF FOOD.

17. THIRD COUNTRY RELIEF FLIGHTS. CANADIAN 707
ARRIVED 0540 FEB 14 WITH 57,200 LBS OF BLANKETS,
MEDICINES, X-RAY EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES. CANADIAN
C-130 ARRIVED 0845 FEB 14 WITH 37,000 LBS OF POWDERED
MILK. BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE C-130 ARRIVED 0855 FEB 14
WITH 30,000 LBS OF TENTS, BLANKETS, AND SUPPLIES.
NICARAGUAN C-47 ARRIVED 0915 FEB 14 WITH 2,500 LBS
OF RED CROSS SUPPLIES. AVIATECA FLIGHT FROM USA
ARRIVED 0915 FEB 14 WITH 32,000 LBS OF FOOD. FOUR
MEXICAN DC-6'S ARRIVED AT 1035, 1040, 1045, AND
1050 FEB 14 BRINGING 10,000; 12,500; 10,000; AND
10,000 LBS RESPECTIVELY OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND FOOD.
PANAMANIAN L-188 ARRIVED 1155 FEB 14 WITH 20,000 LBS
OF FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES. AIR CANADA 747 ARRIVED
1205 FEB 14 WITH 13,704 LBS OF TENTS FOR THE
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CNE. NICARAGUAN C-47 ARRIVED 1621 FEB 14 WITH
11,639 LBS OF FOOD.
MELOY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 15 FEB 1976
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Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GUATEM01235
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760058-0284
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760246/aaaabocr.tel
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